

## Why do people become Mentors? (adapted from MENTOR.org)

A mentor is a senior member who provides a junior member with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement, and a constructive example. Mentors are good listeners, people who care, people who want to help a junior member realize their potential and capitalize on their strengths.

 <p><b>Byron</b></p> <p>When I was in high school, I was really into basketball. And I was good - probably the best on our team. I could see my future. I was headed for the NBA. School wasn't important to me. I didn't spend much time on schoolwork. Then one of my teachers showed me that without better grades, I'd never make it to college. I knew most NBA players were recruited from college, so I had to go to college. This teacher did a lot to help me through high school. I went to college on a basketball scholarship. My first year, I injured my knee and couldn't play anymore. My NBA dreams were gone, but my coach helped me build new dreams. He spent a lot of time helping me plan a new future. Thanks to a lot of help, I graduated and I'm now an assistant basketball coach at a college. I spend a lot of time helping the players realize that athletics are great, but they aren't everything. I also am a Mentor to two high school kids. I hope I can help them in the same way Mentors helped me.</p>	 <p><b>Maria</b></p> <p>I grew up lucky. My parents lived together, and both had good jobs. I did well in school and received a college scholarship. I graduated from college with a degree in business. Now I own my own business and am doing well. I've looked around and have seen a lot of kids who aren't as lucky as I was. Their parents don't live together. Their families don't have much money. I sometimes think that growing up today is just harder than it was when I was younger. I want to give back to my community. I've always liked working with kids. Being a Mentor is a way for me to do both. I spend a lot of time with my Mentee, helping her see that she can make it too.</p>
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## How To Become a Mentor

As a Mentor, you might help your Mentee (the junior member in your organization or community)

- plan a project for mentee's organization or community.
- explore a topic of mutual interest.
- set career goals and start taking steps to realize them.
- strengthen communication skills and the ability to relate well to all kinds of people.
- make healthy choices about day-to-day life, from food choices to exercise and beyond.

These are just a few of the things you will do. The list is almost endless!

## Who is a Mentee?

- A junior member who wants to work with a senior member to achieve her/his goals.
- A junior member who may be seeking guidance from a senior member.
- A junior member who is looking for friendship and support.

**What do mentee want from a mentor?** When asked about their expectations of a mentor, junior members respond that they want

- advice
- access
- advocacy

<b>Advice</b>
<p>You bring a wide range of work and life experiences to your mentoring relationship. As a result, you can be a great source of advice and information. From time to time, your Mentee may need a second opinion or a different perspective. You can provide that!</p> <p>Share your experiences. Were you involved in a similar situation? What did you do? How did it work out? Be willing to share but be sure your Mentee is interested first.</p> <p>Remember that you and your Mentee are different people. Your Mentee has his or her own values, which may be very different from yours. These may lead to very different ideas about what to do.</p> <p>It is your role to offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• insight</li> <li>• advice</li> <li>• suggestions</li> </ul> <p>It is your Mentee's role to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate the options</li> <li>• consider what you have said</li> </ul> <p>make the best decision</p>
<b>Access</b>
<p>One of the most valuable things you can do is to help connect your Mentee with people, opportunities, and information that are otherwise out of reach. That's what access is all about - helping your Mentee find and get involved in new situations or find new resources.</p> <p>Access to resources is one of the most valuable benefits you can offer.</p>
<b>Advocacy</b>
<p>Have you ever had someone stand up for you? Has someone written a letter on your behalf? That's advocacy! That's powerful!</p> <p>If your Mentee needs a work skill, a job reference or a college recommendation, you can help. But remember, to be an effective advocate, you need to know your Mentee well.</p> <p>You will have to create opportunities to get to know your Mentee as a person. The more you learn about your Mentee, the stronger an advocate you can be.</p>

Be sure to talk with your Mentee. Find out what you can do for your Mentee.

- Find out what your Mentee's expectations are.
- Find out what your Mentee's wants are.
- Find out what your Mentee's needs are.

## How to be a good Mentor?

### Your Role as a Mentor

Supervisors wear many "hats," among them

- delegator
- role model
- cheerleader
- coach
- policy enforcer
- spokesperson to senior management
- liaison between staff and the organization

Just as supervisors wear many "hats," so do Mentors. Here are some of the roles a Mentor does and does not play.

A Mentor is a ...	A Mentor isn't a...
Friend coach motivator companion supporter advisor advocate role model	an ATM social worker parent cool peer nag parole officer savior babysitter

### Qualities of Successful

To learn more about the qualities of successful Mentors:

- [A sincere desire to be involved with a junior member.](#)
- [Respect a junior member.](#)
- [Listen actively.](#)
- [Empathize.](#)
- [See solutions and opportunities.](#)
- [Be flexible and open.](#)

<p><b>A Sincere Desire to Be Involved with a junior member</b></p> <p>Mentors have a genuine desire to be part of other people's lives to help them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pursue their interests.</li> <li>• achieve their goals.</li> <li>• handle tough decisions.</li> </ul> <p>Mentors have to be invested in the mentoring process long enough to make a difference.</p>	<p><b>Respect a junior member</b></p> <p>Mentors should not have preconceived notions that junior need to be "rescued."</p> <p>Mentors who convey a sense of respect and equal dignity in the relationship win the trust of their Mentees and the privilege of being their advisors.</p>
<p><b>Listen Actively</b></p> <p>It is relatively easy to give advice or express opinions. It's much harder to suspend judgment and really listen.</p> <p>Mentors often help simply by listening, asking thoughtful questions, and giving young people an opportunity to explore</p>	<p><b>Empathize</b></p> <p>Empathy is the ability to understand, at a very deep level, what another person is going through - even without having had the same life experiences. It is very different from sympathy, which is sharing sad feelings.</p>

<p>their own thoughts with a minimum of interference. When a mentee feel accepted, s/he is more likely to ask for and respond to good ideas.</p>	<p>Of course, you won't always understand completely what your Mentee is going through. That's natural. The ability to empathize and trying to understand are the keys.</p> <p>Effective Mentors can understand what a Mentee is going through, without becoming caught up in the problem themselves.</p>
<p><b>See Solutions and Opportunities</b></p> <p>Good Mentors balance a realistic respect for the real and serious problems faced by their Mentees with optimism about finding equally realistic solutions. They are able to help make sense of a jumble of issues and point out sensible alternatives.</p>	<p><b>Be Flexible and Open</b></p> <p>Good Mentors recognize that relationships take time to develop. They know that communication is a two-way street. They are willing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to take the time to get to know their Mentees.</li> <li>• to learn new things that are important to their mentees.</li> <li>• even to be changed by their relationship.</li> </ul>

### Tips for Success

<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appreciate even the smallest sign of growth</li> <li>• pay close attention to what your Mentee writes</li> <li>• ask open-ended questions</li> <li>• share your thoughts and feelings with your Mentee</li> <li>• try your best to be a good role model</li> <li>• learn any rules that are part of the program</li> <li>• be interested in your Mentee</li> <li>• show that you recognize the Mentee's values and lifestyle</li> <li>• strive for mutual respect</li> <li>• be honest</li> <li>• encourage communication skills</li> <li>• have fun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• think you can change the world overnight</li> <li>• jump to conclusions</li> <li>• be judgmental</li> <li>• forget listening is an important part of communication</li> <li>• forget how important you are to your Mentee</li> <li>• get talked into things that you know are against program rules</li> <li>• try to be a parent</li> <li>• try to inflict your beliefs or values on a mentee rather than demonstrate your values</li> <li>• settle for rudeness or foul language</li> <li>• think kids can't spot insincerity</li> </ul>